Central assistance for new canals in J&K

*233. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Ranbir and Ravi canals in Jammu and Kashmir are in a dilapidated condition;

(b) if so, the steps being taken to repair them; and

(c) whether there is any proposal for funding of new canals in the State?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI): (a) and (b) The Ranbir and Ravi canals in Jammu and Kashmir are functional but require periodic desilting/maintenance, which is being carried out by the State Government.

(c) Irrigation being a State subject, irrigation projects including new canals are being funded and implemented by the concerned State Governments themselves as per their own resources and priorities.

Bonds for Buy-Back Programme

*235. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have identified 24 high coupon bonds of varying maturities with a face value of Rs. 82,524 crore for the buy-back programme announced in this year's budget;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the rate of premium at which buy-back is proposed and how it compares with the existing market price; and

(d) the basis for arriving at the buy-back rate?

THE FINANCE MINISTER (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) The Union Government accepted 131 offers for buy-back of 19 high coupon, relatively liquid, securities amounting to Rs. 14434 crore, from banks and financial institutions, on the basis of multi-security, screen-based auction which was conducted on July 19,2003. The participating banks have been allowed additional deduction for income tax purposes on the premium received, to the extent that such premium is used for

providing for their non-performing assets.

(c) and (d) The buy-back rate was arrived at through screen-based auction. Participating bank and financial institutions were required to quote prices with minimum discount of 7.5% to the average market prices. The actual discount offered ranged from 7.5% to 9.11%.

Adulteration in petroleum products

*237. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government propose to initiate to control adulteration of petrol and other products; and

(b) the steps proposed within a time-frame to control such sales by outlets of oil PSUs?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) In order to prevent adulteration, following steps have been taken:-

(i) issuance of Naphtha & Solvents Control Orders, (ii) establishment of Anti-Adulteration Cell, (iii) blue dyeing/furfural doping of Public Distribution System (PDS) Kerosene,

(iv) regular/surprise inspections by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and officials of Anti-Adulteration Cell (AAC),

(v) revision of Marketing Discipline Guidelines making them more stringent,

(vi) amendment to SKO Control Order mandating filing of quarterly returns & end-use certificates by the kerosene Parallel Marketeers with State Government Authorities.

(vii) preventing use of Parallel Marketing Scheme (PMS) Kerosene in Automobiles,

(viii) introduction of new tamper proof tank-truck locking system,

(ix) trials on Market System.

Under the provisions of various Control Orders issued under Section 3 of Essential Commodities Act, State Governments have been expowered to deal with cases of adulteration.